

Message Text

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ACTION EA-13

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 NSC-10 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SSO-00 DPW-01 IO-03 EUR-10

PRS-01 PA-01 L-02 AID-10 RSR-01 /078 W

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O R 301030 Z APR 73

FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 948

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMCONSUL BIEN HOA

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL CAN THO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL DANANG

USDEL JEC PARIS

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMCONSUL NHA TRANG

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

CINCPAC

CDRUSSAG NKP RTAFB

COMUSMACHTAI BANGKOK

DAO/ SAIGON/ AOSOP- OR

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LIMDIS

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT PINS MILI VS

SUBJECT: VIETNAM CEASEFIRE WEEKLY ASSESSMENT, APRIL 24-30, 1973

1. SUMMARY: THIS WEEK SAW THE PASSING OF X- PLUS 90, THE GOAL SET BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT, BY WHICH DATE IT HAD BEEN HOPED THE RVN AND THE PRG WOULD HAVE ACHIEVED SOME PROGRESS TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. DESPITE SOME JOCKEYING FOR PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE-- IN WHICH THE RVN SEEMS TO HAVE COME OUT AHEAD-- THERE HAS BEEN NO REAL PROGRESS. BOTH SIDES ADVANCED " NEW" NEGOTIATING PROPOSALS IN THE PARIS BILATERALS, BUT NEITHER HAS YIELDED ON BASIC PRINCIPLES. THE TPJMC ARRANGED FOR THE FIRST RELEASE OF CIVILIAN DETAINEES, WHICH GOT OFF TO A HALTING START APRIL 28. HOWEVER, THE NUMBERS INVOLVED ARE MINUTE, COMPARED TO THE TOTALS EACH CLAIMS THE OTHER HOLDS. PERHAPS EQUALLY IMPORTANT, NEITHER SIDE APPEARS YET READY TO RELEASE DETAINEES OF POLITICAL CONSEQUENCE. FIGHTING DROPPED TO ITS LOWEST LEVEL SINCE TET IN EARLY FEBRUARY. THE MASSIVE COMMUNIST LOGISTICS BUILDUP CONTINUES UNABATED, CAUSING GROWING CONCERN, ESPECIALLY IN MR-1. THE ICCS SPENT ANOTHER FRUSTRATING WEEK, YIELDING TO ARBITRARY PRG DEMANDS WHICH PREVENTED TIMELY INSPECTION OF THE CRASH SITE BY SURVIVORS OR THE RECOVERY OF THE DOWNED BUT FLYABLE HELICOPTER IN QUANG TRI. IN THE FPJMT/ MIA, THE DRV HAS PROMISED TO ALLOW THE FIRST FPJMT/ MIA TEAM VISIT TO NVN " IN MAY." END SUMMARY.

2. THE THIRTEENTH POST- CEASEFIRE WEEK SAW THE PASSAGE AT 0800 APRIL OF X- PLUS 90, THE GOAL SET BY THE PARIS AGREEMENT BY WHICH DATE IT WAS HOPED THE TWO SOUTH VIETNAMESE PARTIES WOULD HAVE ACHIEVED PROGRESS TOWARD A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT. THIS HAS NOT BEEN DONE. HOWEVER, CONSCIOUS OF THE 90- DAY DEADLINE, BOTH SIDES THIS WEEK JOCKEYED FOR PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE, ADVANCING " NEW" NEGOTIATING PROPOSALS AT THE EIGHTH BILATERAL SESSION IN PARIS, AND AGREEING IN THE TWO PARTY JOINT MILITARY COMMISSION (TPJMC) IN SAIGON ON THE INITIAL RELEASE OF A SMALL NUMBER OF CIVILIAN DETAINEES.

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3. THE PROPAGANDA ADVANTAGE FELL TO THE RVN, WHOSE APRIL 25 6- POINT PROPOSAL OF A PHASED SCENARIO LEADING TO A GENERAL ELECTION AUGUST 26 WAS MORE IMAGINATIVE THAN THE PRG COUNTER- PROPOSAL AND WAS ALSO WELL PRESENTED, BOTH IN PARIS AND SAIGON. HOWEVER, NEITHER SIDE YIELDED ON BASIC PRINCIPLE: THE GVN STILL INSISTS ON WITHDRAWAL OF " NON- SOUTH VIETNAMESE FORCES" PRIOR TO ELECTIONS, WHILE THE PRG DEMANDS THE FORMATION OF THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF NATIONAL RECONCILIATION AND CONCORD

AND, THROUGH IT, A GUARANTEED POLITICAL ROLE IN THE FUTURE OF SVN BEFORE THE ISSUE OF " DEMOBILIZATION" OF ARMED FORCES CAN BE DEALT WITH. HANOI RADIO ON APRIL 26 BLASTED THE RVN PROPOSAL AS " DECEITFUL, WRONG" AND " ANOTHER TRICK."

4. ON APRIL 24 THE RVN AND THE PRG AGREED IN THE TPJMC ON THE FIRST PHASE OF CIVILIAN DETAINEE RELEASES, AND AFTER A HALTING START THE FIRST RELEASES WERE ACCOMPLISHED APRIL 28. HOWEVER, THE NUMBERS INVOLVED--637 CIVILIANS TO BE RELEASED BY THE PRG, AND 750 BY THE RVN-- ARE MINUTE COMPARED TO THE TOTALS EACH CLAIMS THE OTHER HOLDS. FURTHERMORE, IT APPEARS NEITHER SIDE IS YET PREPARED TO RELEASE PRISONERS OF POLITICAL CONSEQUENCE. OTHER ISSUES REMAIN DEADLOCKED, INCLUDING THE RVN DEMAND THAT THE PRG RELEASE THE 410 ARVN POW' S IT STILL HOLDS, WHILE THE PRG IS INSISTING THAT THE RVN TURN OVER 210 FORMER POW' S WHO HAVE RALLIED TO THE RVN.

5. PRG CHIEF DELEGATE TO THE TPJMC LTGEN TRA, WHO HAS BEEN ABSENT SINCE MARCH 29, HAS REPORTEDLY LEFT HANOI, BUT HE HAS NOT RETURNED TO SAIGON. THE GVN SOUGHT THIS WEEK TO IMPROVE ITS PUBLIC POSTURE VIS- A- VIS THE TPJMC, AGREEING TO ALLOW ACCESS BY VIETNAMESE REPORTERS TO THE PRG DELEGATION AND STAGING ITS OWN PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH THE GVN CHIEF DELEGATE FORCEFULLY EXPOUNDED THE GVN POINT OF VIEW.

6. MILITARY ACTIVITY THRU- OUT SVN DROPPED TO ITS LOWEST LEVEL SINCE TET IN EARLY FEBRUARY. IN MR-1, CONTACT WAS HEAVIEST WEST AND NORTHWEST OF HUE. THE COMMUNIST LOGISTICS BUILDUP CONTINUES IN THE WESTERN HIGHLANDS. CONGEN DANANG REPORTS ARVN COMMANDERS AND US OBSERVERS ARE BEGINNING TO SPEAK OF THE POSSIBILITY OF AN ADVERSE SHIFT IN THE MILITARY BALANCE IN MR-1. NORTHERN BINH
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DINH IN MR-2 CONTINUES TO SEE CONSIDERABLE FIGHTING. WESTERN PLEIKU WAS QUIET THIS WEEK. MR-2 CG LTGEN TOAN VISITED KONTUM APRIL 25-26 AND REPORTEDLY EXPRESSED DISPLEASURE AT THE SCOPE OF CONTACTS BETWEEN ARVN AND COMMUNIST FIELD COMMANDERS THERE, AND MAY HAVE ORDERED THEIR SUSPENSION. IN ANY EVENT, THESE CLOSELY- WATCHED FIELD EXCHANGES HAVE SO FAR FAILED TO ACHIEVE A BATTLEFIELD TRUCE. IN MR-3, THE TONG LE CHAN RANGER CAMP REMAINS BESIEGED; ALTHOUGH ENEMY ARTILLERY ATTACKS HAVE FALLEN OFF, THE CAMP STILL RECEIVES AN AVERAGE OF 150-200 ROUNDS DAILY. MR-3 CG LTGEN MINH CONTINUES TO EXPRESS CONFIDENCE THAT THE ISOLATED OUTPOST CAN HOLD. ELSEWHERE, MR' S 2 AND 3 WERE RELATIVELY QUIET.

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7. AFTER A SURGE LAST WEEKEND, FIGHTING HAS ALSO DROPPED OFF
IN THE DELTA. AN AMMUNITION BARGE BOUND FOR PHNOM PENH MADE ITS

WAY SAFELY UP THE MEKONG TO NEAK LUONG APRIL 28. HOWEVER, COMMUNIST PRESSURE ON HONG NGU CONTINUES, ALTHOUGH IT LESSENERD TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT TWO REGIMENTS OF NVA TROOPS MAY BE PULLING OUT OF DINH TUONG INTO CAMBODIA, THUS LESSENERD-- AT LEAST FOR THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE-- NVA CAPABILITIES FOR INCREASED OFFENSIVE OPERATIONS IN THE NORTHERN DELTA. HOWEVER, THESE SAME REPORTS INDICATE THAT THESE REGIMENTS ARE SCHEDULED ONLY FOR A SHORT PERIOD OF RETRAINING AND REFITTING AND COULD BE REDEPLOYED INTO SVN IN THE FIRST HALF OF MAY.

8. SINCE MID- APRIL THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN TERRORISM, ESPECIALLY IN THE DELTA. AN APRIL 23 BOMB IN A MY THO CRESTURANT KILLED FIVE AND WOUNDED 12. THE FINAL COUNT OF THE EASTER OUTRAGE IN NINH THUAN PROVINCE, THE BLOODIEST POST- CEASEFIRE TERRORIST INCIDENT TO DATE STANDS AT 20 DEAD AND 86 WOUNDED.

9. THE PATTERN OF PERFORMANCE BY THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION FOR CONTROL AND SUPERVISION (ICCS) REMAINED UNALTERED DURING THE WEEK. NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN THE ICCS AND THE PRG ON VISITING THE CRASH SITE OF THE APRIL 7 QUANG TRI HELICOPTER TRAGEDY AND RETRIEVING SALVAGEABLE HELICOPTER NO. 115 HAVE BEEN MARKED BY A SERIES OF ARBITRARY DEMANDS BY THE PRG. WE ARE CONCERNED THAT THE ICCS HAS YIELDED ON POINTS OF BASIC PRINCIPLE, IN PARTICULAR BY FAILING TO INSIST ON PRG COMPLIANCE WITH THAT FUNDAMENTAL PROVISION OF THE PARIS AGREEMENT WHICH OBLIGES SIGNATORIES TO COOPERATE WITH THE ICCS.

10. THIS EPISODE AGAIN DEMONSTRATES NOT ONLY THE DISDAIN IN WHICH THE PRG HOLDS THE ICCS, BUT ALSO THE ATMOSPHERE OF FUTILITY WHICH HAS COME TO PREVAIL IN THAT BODY IN ITS DEALINGS WITH THE PRG.

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11. MEANWHILE, ICCS PLENARY SESSIONS APPROVED A NUMBER OF ADDITIONAL REPORTS FOR FORWARDING TO THE TPJMC, BUT NONE WERE UNANIMOUS IN FINDING ANY PRG CULPABILITY-- DESPITE STATEMENTS TO THAT EFFECT APPENDED IN SEVERAL CASES BY THE CANDEL AND INDODEL. POOR HEALTH CONDITIONS IN PRG- CONTROLLED DUC CO HAVE OBLIGED THE NIICCS TO TEMPORARILY WITHDRAW, AND THE INDONESIANS HAVE STATED THEY INTEND TO WITHDRAW MAY 1 FROM BEN HET AND AN LOC-- BOTH ON SECURITY GROUNDS.

12. THE FOUR PARTY JOINT MILITARY TEAM (MISSING IN ACTION) (FPJMT/ MIA) MET TWICE DURING THE WEEK, REACHING AGREEMENT ON

FOUR PROCEDURAL POINTS. THREE OF THESE HAD OCCASIONED MUCH DISPUTE: THE LOCATION OF THE FPJMT/ MIA HQ, TO BE IN SAIGON ONLY, NOT SAIGON AND HANOI); THE SIZE OF EACH PARTY' S SAIGON TEAM (35); AND THE APPLICABILITY TO THE FPJMT/ MIA OF THEIR POINTS ON PRIVILEGES AND IMMUNITIES PREVIOUSLY AGREED UPON IN THE FPJMC CONTEXT. THE RVN YIELDED IN THESE MATTERS. PERHAPS THE MOST HOPEFUL EVENT OF THE WEEK WAS AGREEMENT BY THE DRV TO ALLOW FPJMT/ MIA TEAM TO VISIT NVN " IN MAY" TO VISIT THE GRAVES OF AMERICANS WHO DIED THERE IN CAPTIVITY, AND TO DISCUSS PROCEDURES FOR REPATRIATION OF REMAINS.

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